



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-0668

FACT SHEET

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 1, 2003

Tom Shanahan
(208) 334-0668

The Facts About Adoption

TOTAL ADOPTIONS

- About 1 million children in the United States live with adoptive parents.
- Nationally, the total number of adoptions in 1992 (the most recent year for which data is available) was 126,951, a 7-percent increase from 1987's 118,449.
- In Idaho, the total number of all adoptions in 1991 (the most recent year for which data is available) was 362, nearly three times greater than 1988's 126.
- Between 2 percent and 4 percent of U.S. families include an adopted child.

HUGE IMPACT

The majority of Americans are personally affected by adoption. A 1997 survey found that 6 in 10 Americans have had personal experience with adoption, meaning that they themselves, a family member, or a close friend was adopted, had adopted a child, or had placed a child for adoption.

TYPES OF ADOPTIONS

There are several types of adoptive placements:

- *Public Agencies* – Placements via government agencies (such as the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare) or their contractors account for 15-20 percent of all adoptions.
- *Private Agencies* – Placements via nonprofit and for-profit agencies, as well as independent placements (doctors, attorneys, etc.), accounted for nearly 40 percent of all adoptions in 1992 (the most recent year for which data is available).
- *Kinship and Stepparent* – Combined, placements in relatives' homes or the spouse of one birthparent (respectively) accounted for 42 percent of all adoptions in 1992.
- *International* – Placements of children who are citizens of a foreign nation accounted for 5 percent of all adoptions in 1992.
- *Transracial* – Placements of children with an adoptive family of another race account for 8 percent of all U.S. adoptions (including international adoptions).

ADOPTION TRENDS

- Between 1988 and 1997, Idaho adoption filings increased by 13 percent from 929 to 1,052, respectively.
- In 1999, Idaho had the nation's highest percentage increase in the rate of adoption of children from foster care. Adoptions of Idaho foster children nearly doubled from 57 in 1998 to 107 in 1999, while similar adoptions increased by only 26 percent nationwide.
- Adoptions of Idaho children in foster care more than doubled between 1995 and 2001 from 44 to 110, respectively. Foster care adoptions declined in fiscal year 2002 to 92 because many families postponed finalization to take advantage of federal tax credit changes that began Jan. 23, 2003. The changes allow a flat \$10,000 credit for adoptive families.
- International adoptions in the U.S. more than doubled between 1992 and 1997 from 6,536 to 13,620, respectively.

(more)

awaiting adoptive placement.

- In 1999, 46,000 children were adopted from the public foster care system nationwide, an increase of nearly 26 percent from 1998's 36,000 children.
- Returning home was not an option for about 100,000 of the children in the foster care system nationwide in 1995, yet only 20,000 were adopted that year.
- Of the 122,000 children nationwide who exited foster care during the first half of 1999, 16 percent were adopted. (Of those who were not adopted, 59 percent were reunified, 12 percent went to a legal guardian or a relative, 8 percent were emancipated, and 5 percent had other outcomes.)

PLACEMENT SETTINGS

- Among children who are adopted through Idaho's Foster Care Adoption Program, 80 percent of them are adopted by their foster families, 7 percent are adopted by relatives, and 13 percent are adopted by unrelated families.
- Nationwide, 64 percent of children adopted from foster care in 1999 were adopted by foster parents, 16 percent by relatives, 20 percent by people unrelated to them, and less than 1 percent by stepparents. (Relatives who were also foster parents were counted as relatives.)

THE WAIT

- As of March 31, 2000, approximately 134,000 children nationwide were waiting to be adopted.
- Nationwide, the median wait for foster children awaiting adoption on Sept. 30, 1999, was 36 months, and the average wait was 44 months. Fully one-quarter of these children had been waiting 60 months or more.
- Nationwide, of those foster children who were legally free and awaiting adoption in 1990, about 19 percent had been waiting for adoption less than 6 months; 12 percent had been waiting 6-12 months; 21 percent had been waiting 1-2 years; and 46 percent had been waiting 2 years or longer.
- Idaho is recruiting for about 35 foster children awaiting adoption.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Of foster children who were legally free and waiting adoption in 2001, 98 percent had one or more special needs or risk factors for special needs. Idaho's definition of "special needs" includes:

- A child who has a physical, mental, emotional, or medical disability or is at risk of developing such disability based on known information regarding the birthparents or child's history;
- A child whose age makes it difficult to find an adoptive home;
- A child who is a member of a sibling group that must not be placed apart; and
- A child who has established such close emotional ties with a foster family that a replacement is likely to be as traumatic to the child as removal from a birthparent.

###

NOTE TO EDITORS: For more information, please contact Meri Brennan at (208) 334-5697.